

Turkey to Bar Overflights To Monitor Arms Tests

Ankara Angered By House Vote on \$50 Million Grant

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Turkey's top military commander has asserted that his country will not permit the United States to use Turkish airspace for monitoring Soviet compliance with the new strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II).

Clearly angered by the refusal of the House of Representatives to endorse a \$50 million grant to Turkey, Gen. Kenan Evren, chief of staff of the Turkish armed forces, was quoted in Turkish newspapers yesterday as saying that "under the circumstances we cannot allow U2 flights over Turkey."

The use of high-altitude spy planes along Turkey's border with the Soviet Union is viewed as one of the main verification means necessary to offset the loss of U.S. intelligence gathering installations in Iran.

The White House had no comment on the general's statement, but administration officials expressed the hope that it was not the final Turkish position on the issue.

Evren's statement, according to reports from Ankara, was made with the full support of Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. Whether it is the final position of Turkey, it is likely to be used by Senate opponents of SALT II.

House and Senate conferees are scheduled to meet today to reconcile differences in a foreign aid bill. The Senate has approved President Carter's proposal to give Turkey \$50 million. The House, however, dealt a painful defeat to the administration by insisting that the money should be provided as a loan, not a grant.

The House rejection reflected continued strength of Greek-Americans and their supporters. They argue that Turkey continues to occupy a large part of Cyprus without any serious indication of willingness to settle the dispute, even though Congress lifted an arms embargo against Ankara last year.

Cyprus has been divided since July 1974, when Turkish forces invaded the

island and took control of the northern 40 percent of it. Nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots who lived in the area now controlled by Turkey are living as refugees in the south.

Evren, who returned to Turkey Friday night after an 18-day visit to the United States and Canada, was quoted by Turkish newspapers as saying he found the House action "both surprising and curious."

"Aid should not be linked with the issue of U2 flights," he said. "But by refusing aid, they [the Americans] have contradicted themselves. Even if they give us \$150 million we can make no concessions. Under the circumstances we cannot allow U2 flights over Turkey."

The U.S. administration asked Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit last month to permit American U2 planes based in Cyprus to use Turkish airspace in the area of the Black Sea and along the Turkish-Soviet border for collecting data on Soviet strategic arms deployment and testing.

Ecevit is reported to have replied that he would permit U2 overflights provided Moscow does not object. He urged the administration to discuss the matter directly with the Soviets.

Evren's statement is the first official Turkish reaction to the House vote. It has an added value since Turkish military leaders, while wielding great political influence, are normally not given to making public pronouncements on controversial issues.

Administration officials have argued that the \$50 million grant was justified because Turkey, a key member of NATO, is experiencing severe economic difficulties.

It is a part of an emergency \$150 million assistance plan necessary to stave off the "economic collapse" of Turkey, the officials said.

The United States already has extended about \$400 million in loans to Turkey this year.

Evren's sharp reaction came after what U.S. officials describe as his "very successful" official visit to the United States during which he had met with nearly all key officials, including Defense Secretary Harold Brown, national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other service chiefs.

Administration officials said yesterday that a compromise could be worked out that would induce the Turks to permit U2 overflights and thus strengthen administration arguments in the coming Senate debate on SALT II.

*Original SALT
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